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UbD/DI Ch. 1 + 2

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**Understanding by Design/Differentiating Instruction Chapter One**

The basic concept put forth in the opening chapter reveals the fundamentals of *Understanding by Design* and *Differentiating Instruction*. It is becomes evident by reading the chapter that one cannot effectively exist without the other. The reason for that can be understood by defining the two concepts. *Understanding by Design* is mainly dedicated to establishing a sound curriculum followed by accurate assessment so that knowledge can be gained about possible improvements. This portion mainly focuses on “what” and “how” we teach. Understanding comes differently for different types of learners, so to work on a balanced curriculum would be to lead a classroom towards *Understanding by Design.* *Differentiating Instruction* also focuses on how we teach, but also addresses the “whom” and the “where”. The basic idea behind this comes from understanding that a diverse population of students will not all benefit from the same models of instruction due to their different experiences and beliefs. In relation to what I learned at my earlier EDU courses at SMCC, this chapter focuses on the importance of avoiding teaching to the “bell curve”. To do that would be to focus instruction on mainly the group of students who are somewhere in the middle of understanding the concepts of the class while paying less attention to the disadvantaged and advanced students.

**Ubd/DI Chapter 2**

This chapter deals with understanding that beyond teaching to different learning styles and to students of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and socio-economic statuses, there are indeed other variables that can become a larger barrier to student learning and may be even harder to detect. For example; the chapter tells the story of a student named Elise, a girl who had previously gotten consistent good grades until she suddenly dropped off and started failing her classes. Her teachers were perplexed when trying to understand what they were doing wrong. In the end, it becomes known that it was not an act by the teachers that led to her sudden collapse in academics, but her own endeavor to purposefully fail classes in order to provide a reason for her parents to talk to one another again since they had recently separated. What we can take out of this is that beyond developing a masterful curriculum and understanding how to teach to a multitude of learners of different backgrounds, teachers must not forget that what really matters in teaching is getting to know the students on a personal level and becoming their guide toward autonomy and understanding the world that they are being raised in. Personal circumstances are not only common in a student’s life, but unpredictable, hard to detect, and sometimes even harder to overcome. In the example of Elise, it seems near impossible to devise a strategy to get her academics in order when her first and foremost concern is to reunite her parents.